

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

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State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Employment increases in July - unemployment declines

Unemployment rates in 66 of Wisconsin's 72 counties declined in July, including all ten of the counties in Northwest Wisconsin. The unemployment rate in the northwest region in July was 4.6 percent, down from 5.7 percent in June and lower than the 4.8 percent rate twelve months ago. This is the first month in 2002 to produce an unemployment rate lower than one year earlier. It is also the first time since last October that the local rate was lower than the state rate.

The unemployment rate in Wisconsin, not seasonally adjusted, was 4.7 percent in July. The current rate is lower than the 5.1 percent unemployed in June, but higher than the rate one year ago of 4.6 percent. Nationally, the unemployment rate was unchanged in July at 6.0 percent but much higher than the 4.7 percent rate one year earlier. Comparatively, the northwest area is doing better, but the increase in jobs that spurred the lower unemployment is short-lived. By October higher unemployment rates will return to the region.

Not all northwest counties had a lower unemployment rate than the state. In Douglas County the unemployment rate in July was 4.8 percent, in Rusk County, the rate was 5.0 percent, in Iron it was 5.6 percent and in Ashland County the rate was 7.1 percent. Even though the Ashland County unemployment rate remains the highest in the area, the reduction of 2.4 percentage points from June was the greatest reduction in the state.

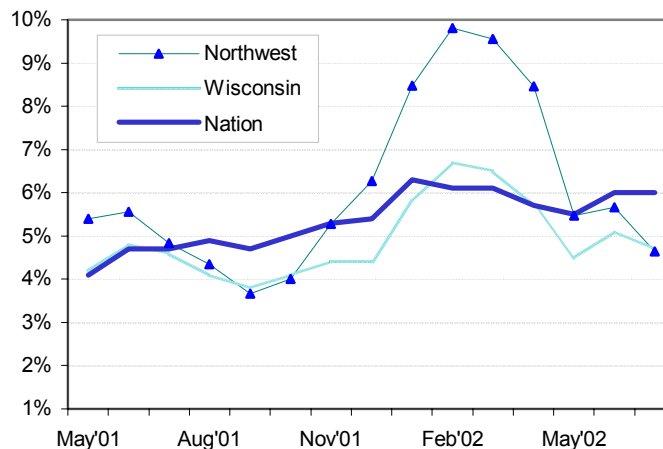
One reason for the large reduction in Ashland County was a 220 decline in the number of unemployed in the county. While some of this reduction was due to job seekers finding work, half of it was due to job seekers dropping out of the labor force. The labor force in the Ashland County declined to 8,640 in July

compensating for a large, and unwarranted, increase in June to 8,750. Underlying the increase, and subsequent decline, of job seekers are the laid off workers from reductions in manufacturing employment that occurred during 2001.

Six counties in Northwest Wisconsin reported unemployment rates lower than the state in July. The lowest rate in the region was 3.4 percent in Taylor County, followed by 4.0 percent unemployed in Sawyer and 4.2 percent in both Bayfield and Burnett counties. The unemployment rate in Washburn County was 4.5 percent and in Price County it was 4.6 percent.

Not only were unemployment rates lower than last month in all ten counties, but five counties, Ashland, Price, Rusk, Taylor, and Washburn, had rates lower than one year ago. Because of a larger share of manufacturing jobs in these counties unemployment rates remain high. While the loss of production jobs has nearly stopped, the industry has not fully recovered from the last few years.

Unemployment Rates-Not seasonally adjusted



	May'01	Jun'01	Jul'01	May'02	Jun'02	Jul'02
Northwest	5.4%	5.6%	4.8%	5.5%	5.7%	4.6%
Wisconsin	4.2%	4.8%	4.6%	4.5%	5.1%	4.7%
Nation	4.1%	4.7%	4.7%	5.5%	6.0%	6.0%

The counties with the lowest unemployment rates in July represent the tourism sector in the region. Throughout the region, retail trade employers added over 100 jobs, wholesale trade employers (suppliers of food and beverages to restaurants and resorts) added 50, and services industry employers added 90.

As trade and services industry employers were adding jobs, government agencies were laying off workers. Most of the reductions in government occurred in local school

districts where workers in maintenance, bus drivers, food preparation, and teacher support are not under twelve-month contracts. Work-study jobs at post-secondary institutions are also suspended during summer break.

Most of the labor force changes in July followed seasonal trends, including the traditional lay offs over the July 4th holiday primarily from the region's manufacturing employers. This year, the number of initial claims filed for unemployment compensation benefits increased by 650 during the week that ended July 6. However, since the

first week in July claims have declined and a running average of the last four weeks shows 83 fewer initial claims filed for benefits this year compared with the same four weeks last year. On-the-other-hand, continued claims for benefits remain higher in each week of this year compared with the same week one year ago.

July 2002 Estimates

Not seasonally adjusted	Wisconsin	Ashland	Bayfield	Burnett	Douglas	Iron	Price	Rusk	Sawyer	Taylor	Washburn
Civilian Labor Force*	3,117,000	8,640	8,020	7,730	23,670	3,570	7,010	7,200	11,290	11,070	8,540
Employed	2,970,600	8,030	7,680	7,410	22,530	3,370	6,690	6,830	10,840	10,700	8,160
Unemployed	146,400	610	340	320	1,130	200	320	360	450	370	380
Unemployment rate(%)	4.7%	7.1%	4.2%	4.2%	4.8%	5.6%	4.6%	5.0%	4.0%	3.4%	4.5%
Total jobs, all industries**	2,847,340	8,880	4,520	4,980	19,130	2,510	6,460	6,000	7,940	9,290	6,400
Construction & Mining	139,110	390	310	310	1,180	400	240	220	440	490	310
Manufacturing	573,550	1,700	200	1,060	1,200	490	2,560	2,360	800	3,300	1,180
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	129,500	210	280	150	2,840	50	130	200	160	540	210
Wholesale Trade	139,620	170	40	30	1,260	60	140	150	130	480	170
Retail Trade	512,880	1,700	920	1,060	4,020	590	1,060	750	2,190	1,480	1,490
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	154,660	360	150	180	510	40	220	130	320	380	210
Services	810,010	2,550	1,190	820	5,420	490	1,200	890	1,970	1,660	1,520
Government	388,000	1,810	1,440	1,380	2,700	400	920	1,290	1,940	930	1,290
Change from previous month											
Civilian Labor Force*	3,300	-100	40	110	50	-140	-80	-10	50	80	-110
Employed	16,100	120	110	130	250	-100	-30	90	140	200	-30
Unemployed	-12,800	-220	-70	-20	-200	-40	-50	-100	-90	-120	-80
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.4%	-2.4%	-1.0%	-0.3%	-0.8%	-0.9%	-0.7%	-1.5%	-0.8%	-1.1%	-0.9%
Total jobs, all industries**	-24,050	0	30	20	-390	-100	-140	-50	10	-30	-160
Construction & Mining	2,340	30	10	10	80	10	30	10	10	10	0
Manufacturing	-20	-20	0	-10	-10	10	0	-10	-30	10	-20
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	-3,060	0	0	0	10	0	0	-10	-20	-20	-10
Wholesale Trade	-150	0	-10	0	30	0	0	0	0	30	0
Retail Trade	1,360	30	30	-10	30	0	0	0	60	-30	10
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	770	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
Services	3,310	50	160	20	-170	-20	20	-30	70	-10	0
Government	-28,610	-80	-170	0	-370	-90	-180	-20	-90	-20	-130
Change from one year ago											
Civilian Labor Force*	56,400	160	200	30	660	140	-40	-20	1,220	200	50
Employed	50,500	190	190	20	450	120	80	50	1,180	270	100
Unemployed	5,800	-40	20	20	210	10	-120	-60	40	-70	-50
Unemployment rate(%)	0.1%	-0.6%	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	0.1%	-1.7%	-0.9%	0.0%	-0.7%	-0.6%
Total jobs, all industries**	12,030	-70	220	-50	1,480	50	20	60	940	290	0
Construction & Mining	1,560	-20	20	20	120	20	10	-10	30	0	20
Manufacturing	-14,790	-110	0	20	-110	0	70	10	10	120	-100
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	-2,120	-10	10	0	350	0	0	-10	0	20	0
Wholesale Trade	300	-10	-10	0	70	0	-10	10	-10	20	10
Retail Trade	4,000	-30	20	-20	150	10	0	0	230	20	10
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	2,500	10	-10	-10	10	0	0	0	10	20	-10
Services	19,940	-100	20	-90	480	-10	-10	20	240	100	0
Government	630	200	160	40	400	30	-40	50	430	-20	70

* Includes participants residing in area. ** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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